
Health Care Committee

2SSB 6197

Brief Description: Creating the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Regala, Eide, Prentice, Fraser, Brown, Kline, Kohl-Welles and Shin).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities to develop an action plan for eliminating health disparities.

Hearing Date: 2/21/06

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The National Institutes of Health have defined "health disparities" as the "differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups." According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are several health areas where different racial and ethnic populations experience health disparities as exhibited through poorer health and a higher frequency of premature death than other populations. The CDC attributes these differences to a combination of genetic variations, environmental factors, language and cultural barriers, unequal access to health care, discrimination, and specific health behaviors. The Department of Health and Human Services has identified six health areas where it has established near-term goals for reducing health disparities. These six health areas include: cancer screening, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), immunizations, and infant mortality.

In 2004, the Legislature created the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities (Committee) through the adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution 8419. The Committee issued a report on health disparities in Washington on November 1, 2005. The report contained several recommendations and findings for the Legislature's consideration. Among the Committee's recommendations was to create an "interagency coordinating council under the direction of the Governor to promote and facilitate communication, collaboration, and cooperation among state agencies and programs in the communities."

Summary of Bill:

The Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities (Council) is established to promote and facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration among state agencies, communities of color, and the public and private sector with respect to addressing health disparities. By 2012, the Council must create an action plan for eliminating health disparities. The action plan must include plans to address diabetes, asthma, infant mortality, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, stroke, breast cancer, cervical cancer, prostate cancer, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, mental health, smoking cessation, and immunization rates. The action plan must be updated every two years.

The Governor or the Governor's designee shall serve as the chair of the Council. In addition to the Governor, the Council shall consist of twenty other members including representatives of state government entities with jurisdiction over minority affairs, health care, higher education, the workforce, and the environment, as well as two public members representing health care consumers. The State Board of Health is to provide assistance to the Governor by convening and assisting the Council.

Beginning January 15, 2008, the Council shall report its progress to the Governor and the Legislature every two to four years. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee shall review the Council and its functions and present findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 14, 2006.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.